The Patne area at the southern foot of the Ajanta Hill Range must have been occupied by man much before the culture-stage of the Late or Advanced Acheulian or the geological period of Late Middle Pleistocene. But at present there is no evidence available of that time for assessment. Yet, it is certain that the moderate climate, easy availability of water, game, vegetable food such as fruits, roots, tubers, etc., and raw material for tools as also the safety afforded by the naturally carved deep and spacious valleys in the Hill Range must have been the major attractions for the man to occupy the area. The evidence of occupation of this area by man through the periods of Middle Palaeolithic, Upper Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Chalcolithic, Historical and the modern times testifies the statement.

There is no evidence of fossils, except that of ostrich eggshell pieces, from the excavation. But extrapolating the evidence of Late Pleistocene fossils from Inamgaon (Kajale, et al., 1976) it may be inferred that in the forest of Patne and in the nearby Girna and the Tapi valleys were living Hexaprotodon.
palaeindicus, Equus namadicus, Elephas, Bos, Bubalus, Cervus, Chital etc.

The environmental conditions and the life of man at Patne during the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic times would not have been different from elsewhere in the nearby Upper Godavari valley and the Girna and the main Tapti valleys. Still, because of the lack of sufficient material it is not proposed here to sketch the life of man in this area during the Lower and the Middle or even the Advanced Middle Palaeolithic times. The life during the Upper Palaeolithic and the Mesolithic periods is depicted in the following pages.

The environmental conditions during the Upper Palaeolithic times were changing. The nature of sediments, as discussed in the earlier part of the thesis, clearly suggests that deposition was taking place in the fluvial fan environment. The streams were frequently changing their courses and depositing finer sediments on their banks regularly. These banks were covered by forest cover more or less similar to the present day dry deciduous type. The fluvial flats in their fan zone were gradually rising due to slow and regular deposition. The man could have easily occupied these fluvial flats throughout
the year except during the periods of high floods. The flat specious spurs on the northern slopes of the Hill Range were perhaps occupied during high floods. During the non-rainy days man could have easily occupied the fluvial flats and the stream bed proper. In the stream bed must have been preserved, as at present, pools of water in suitable morphological depressions. The forest cover must have certainly reduced the rate of evaporation of water from these pools. This would have helped increase the duration of water supply.

The Upper Palaeolithic man at Patne was much better equipped than his predecessor, the Middle Palaeolithic man. In his tool-kit and other remains are reflected further development in technology, more complex methods of hunting, increase in the number of crafts, aesthetic sense and practice of art.

In the blade-production technique the shape of the flake, called blade, to be detached from the prepared core was clear in the mind of the tool maker. The basic idea in this is similar to that in the Levalloisian technique although the core-preparation differed and a series of blades could be removed in the former once the core is prepared as against only one at a time in the latter. This would indicate that the Upper Palaeolithic man further elaborated the Levalloisian technique.
In the production of tool forms as well the foresight of this man is evident. He had prepared them for meeting his future needs and not merely for the sake of meeting immediate needs. Perhaps the knowledge of hafting of the tools permitted him to do so. Not all the varieties of blade, burin, scraper, point and awl were used in bare hand and most of them were set in a wooden or bone handle. The hafted tool could not only work for a long but also be used whenever necessary in future and would not have to be replaced until it was damaged. Besides, it could work much more effectively and efficiently than that to be used in bare hand and without hurting the fingers.

The varied tool forms this man had prepared express his diverse activities. Similarly, further augmentation in the tool varieties in later times suggests an increase in his needs. With this man we find a revolutionary change in the hunting equipment. The finds of tanged and notched arrowheads from Fatne is a clear proof that the Upper Palaeolithic man used the bow and arrow. Invention of this mechanical device increased the range of the missile and the accuracy of its aim. It is more accurate than spear especially for smaller games, and more profitable in forest hunting. Preparation of bow and arrow necessitated the selection
and collection of proper natural products of the region such as straight, light and tubular needs for arrow-shafts, gum or resin for firmly setting the arrow-tip in the shaft, elastic wood variety for an arch of the bow and sinews for a tough bow-string.

Hunting was as important an occupation of this man as it was with his Lower and Middle Palaeolithic forbearers. The hunted animals provided him meat, bones for tools and weapons, sinews for thread, skins for clothing and stomachs for storage.

Man around Patne hunted, among others, ostrich birds, the flocks of which roamed then in the plains at the foot of the Ajanta Hill Range. An ostrich (Hamlyn, 1972) is the largest bird, taller than man, and the adult in the living species weighs more than 90 kg. The female lays 10-12 eggs in one season, each weighing 1 to 1.5 kg. The Bushmen of southern Africa use the eggshell as water-bottles and food-containers. The magnificent white plumes in the wings and tail of male bird were once used for body decoration and were highly valued as ornaments. This bird runs at a great speed for long distances and its hunting requires great skill. The Bushmen use disguises in the hunting of the ostrich. The hunter impersonates the bird by the skin with the head, neck and tail feathers and thus comes closer to
the quarry. It is not unlikely, the Upper Palaeolithic man at Patne might have used similar tactics while hunting this bird.

Ostrich was a valuable bird for the man at Patne. It supplied large quantity of meat. Its bones, especially the strong leg bones, must have also been made use of. The eggshells of it served varied purposes. They were used as water-bottles, besides, possibly food-containers. They were an important raw material for beads. Perhaps the feathers of this bird were also used for personal decoration.

The use of eggshells as water-bottles and food-containers permitted the hunter to pursue the game away from his home and water source for a long time. Storage of these essentials in the eggshells in his home made his life more comfortable. These were, therefore, his precious possessions. Perhaps because of a comparatively more comfortable life than his predecessors he could find some time for personal decoration and artistic endeavours and make his life more enjoyable.

The use of ornaments for personal decoration is attested by the finds of beads of eggshell and shell. Possibly, as among the Bushmen, the eggshell beadmaking here was the job of women (Sandelowsky, 1971); similarly,
the methods of making these beads in the Upper Palaeolithic times might not have been much different from those adopted by the African Bushwomen as their description by many observers and the detailed examination of the beads from Patne would suggest. On this basis I may be permitted to assume the probable method of ostrich eggshell bead-making. The eggshell was first broken into pieces with the teeth. The rough edges were chipped off with light hammer to make the pieces circular. These circular pieces were then pierced from one side by using a stone borer or awl. The pierced pieces were strung together on a string of either a soft bark fiber or sinew and ground to a circular shape. This description also brings out one of the functions of a large number of borers or awls found in the Upper Palaeolithic industries at Patne.

Body decoration by beads must have been very popular at Patne and for that purpose apart from ostrich eggshell beads, the beads of shells from coastal area were also used. How these shells were procured is not known; but the Patne man had long distance contacts for obtaining required material has been attested to by this evidence.

While decoration of body with beads of eggshell and shell and also possibly the plumes points to an aesthetic sense of this man, the decoration of eggshells
with engravings, simple though as they are, exhibits his artistic tendencies. The trellis pattern found engraved on ostrich eggshell fragments, as has been mentioned before, represents the direct evidence of the Upper Palaeolithic art in India. But at the same time this evidence goes on to suggest much more than this. Engraving on the eggshell required the use of some tool. The burin was meant to be used for engraving wood or bone. Experiments have amply shown that the engraved lines like those occurring on the eggshell pieces from Patne could have been engraved by a burin rather than any other form of tool. The evidence thus confirms the function of the burins so prolifically found at Patne.

As a matter of fact artistic tendencies of the Stone Age man can be visualized as far back as the Lower Palaeolithic times in the beautifully shaped handaxes. But the artistic pursuits of the Upper Palaeolithic man differ in one important respect. This man possessed an ability to transfer the shape - the shape with which he got fully acquainted - to a flat surface. He must have, therefore, been fully acquainted with the design of trellis. Otherwise it could not have been possible for him to represent it on the eggshells.
Can it be that he became well-familiar with this pattern while erecting his hut by trellising the branches of trees? It is doubtful that the Upper Palaeolithic man at Patne lived in the open without erecting some modest type of shelters such as the huts made of branches of trees and leaves.

From the available evidence it is not possible to understand precisely about the pattern and size of the Upper Palaeolithic settlement at Patne. It seems quite possible that men were mainly engaged in hunting and the women and children looked after other minor works such as preparation of skins for clothing and sinews for bowstring, maintenance of huts or shelters, collection of fruits and roots, preparation of body ornaments, etc.

Perhaps the same system of division of work prevailed during the succeeding Mesolithic period. But now the Mesolithic life was more progressive or developed. The use of composite tools revolutionized the methods of hunting, fishing and food-gathering. Whether the non-occurrence of the ostrich eggshell pieces in the excavated Mesolithic deposits indicate extinction of this bird by this time or desertion by this bird of the Patne area cannot be said with certainty at this stage as the excavation was conducted in a limited area. However, sufficient game animals must have been available for hunting for this man in the Patne area. The bow
and arrow, pointed sticks and barbed spears were used in hunting.

The sickles and knives were the most important tools for collecting vegetable foods. The collection of vegetable foods was probably mostly done by women and for collecting them receptacles of skin, bark or woven reeds were used. In small pools of the streams fishes were caught by the boys and girls by hand as is the practise among the Bhils of the area at present.

It seems likely that, like the palaeolithic predecessors, vegetable foods constituted a higher proportion than meat in the diet of the Mesolithic man at Patne although no traces of the former have been found so far. Perhaps naturally grown cereals were also included in his diet. It appears food was cooked and consumed. The evidence of a hearth containing ash and charcoal bits, burnt clay lumps and charcoal bits in the loessic deposit indicate that the Mesolithic man at Patne definitely knew the use of fire. The Patne Mesolithic man lived perhaps a comparatively more settled life than his predecessors. The comparatively drier conditions during the Phase III B would not have altered the way of life of man at Patne much.

There was no evidence of pottery from any of the deposits. But the burnt clay lumps from the loessic
deposits may have given some idea to the Mesolithic man about the properties of the burnt clay which in turn would have perhaps helped his successors know making pottery, a further stage in the cultural development of man heralding the Neolithic Age.